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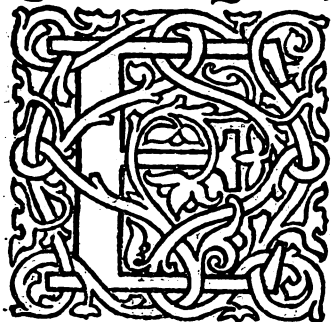
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A Great French Decorator



EMILE GALLÉ, one of the greatest living promoters of evolution in the decorative arts, is an artist in the highest sense of the word. The idea of the beautiful has taken hold of his thoughts, and all his actions are the realization of this idea. Lively, restless, he is constantly looking for it everywhere. His life is a continual dream; with him it is the mind which makes use of the body. Looking at him, one is reminded of those old artists whose life work was concentrated in the creation of one of those wonderfully carved choir stalls, having found perfect happiness in the fulfillment of his ideal.

EMILE GALLÉ developed to what he is only in 1884, when he had a sort of revelation while studying Japanese art. The criticism has been made that he seeks his inspiration, indeed has based his art wholly upon that of the far East; but an abyss separates Gallé's style from that of the Orientals. He defends himself with indignation against this charge. He says: "It is true, of course, that the same living models as those in my work have been used in Japan, and in Europe, too, by artists who have made from them supple and free naturalistic decorations, but each one of us has interpreted them according to his temperament, his race, his style, and his intellectuality."

Has also been insinuated that Gallé, as director of his grand manufactories, attends personally but very little to the production of the work which he signs. To tell the truth, he has had for thirteen

years a remarkable assistant, Hestaux. A conscientious and patient artist, sculptor, engraver on wood, chaser on metal, he has kept his personality by the side of his Lorraine master.

IN the wood department of the manufactory exotic fragrance prevails. There one finds in thin veneers nine hundred precious perfumes, most of them coming from Brazil. The torrid sun of that region has put the sweetness of his dying rays into them. These veneers show the pale rose of April dawn and the voluptuous sunsets of autumn. Here is the dark green of the pine, and here the ochre shades of the earth upturned by the plow.

With these veneers Gallé composes on his art furniture inconceivable decorations. The peculiarities, the caprices of the inside bark, the heart or the knots of the wood, furnish him with exquisite, unexpected ideas for designs. Nature collaborates with the artist, offering to him the efforts of centuries, working out strange fantasies under the bark.

WHEN GALLÉ in his compositions reproduces a plant, he works out its lines, colors and masses with infinite art and without modifying nature too much. In a word, he obtains his best results by arranging what nature provides for him in the original structure of the wood. He knows the soul and history of all flowers and plants. He knows all the legends referring to them. To him they are persons whose character he paints. Last year it was the turn of the flowers of our ponds, of the rivulets and the rivers, the nymphs, whose sleeping leaves rest on the clear water like dark clouds. At present he sings the mysterious glory of the poppy. They climb to the beds and to the cupboards. Their stems form motives for feet and cornices. On the foregrounds



of impossible landscapes the poppies rise, morbid and fantastic.

ADAMIRABLE furniture! Beds on which one would like to sleep and to die; tables with dim decorations, leaning on which one would like to think for days. Here sylvan anemones and ranunculus of the woods on salvaged ground, roseate with the blood spread from a dead aster, raise phantom silhouettes. Yonder, the double arrowheads raise themselves, looking like pikes thrown across the earth and the waves by the arms of furious demons. A hollow ravine, from whose sides, cleft with barrenness, rise Scotch pines, waving their despairing arms into an implacable sky, and tattered thistles exposing the grayness of their misery.

AN étagère, composed of forty different veneers, has in front gay auroras and melancholy moon-flowers. In the work-room is a decorated partition for the woods from the islands. On sculptured oceans, caravels which brought these woods are sailing. The mahogany, the Bourbon palm, the rosewood, the sandal wood, which perfumes the axe that cuts it down, are arranged by the artist in the most beautiful conception imaginable.

THE infernal meuble composed on the lines of Maurice Maeterlinck, "Look, what I bring you, the bad plants of the earth," must especially be mentioned. There are nettles, briars, the mandrake, whose roots have the shape of a human face, the henbane, covered with viscous bristles whose fluffy flowers bring forth obscene scenes, the fistulous and glaucous hemlock, on which stains of violaceous purple are like stigmas of shame for the crime on Socrates, the pubescent digitalis, whose purple corolla is still tainted with human blood, a glass

from which the sorcerers drank, and the marigold, the poppy, and the milkwort with its greenish leaves, abominably vicious. At the feet of this fantastic piece cling bats and night-millers.

LIKE William Morris, who assisted by Rossetti and Burne Jones, made art furniture, glass windows, leather work and tapestry, Gallé is one of the few who have applied themselves with equal success to various decorative arts. King of artistic furniture, he is likewise the king of crystal. There is no one who knows better how to play with the lights and tints of this fragile and transparent substance. He has surpassed those artistic glass-workers of Murano, Venice, and Bohemia. He has created a new art, and what a graceful and delicate one; putting new life into the material, the forms, and the designs. On his glass he obtains lunar reflections through oxide of cobalt. He gives them the light tortoise-shell color by using opals and red glass. By his, and the chrome of antique green, the cobalt, the manganese bring forth dismal ravines and the heavy vapors of the sky. Carbon or sulphur brown, yellow, with the agate effects on silver, peacock blue of iron of a severe richness, flames of copper, greenish transparent clouds, carnal roses from rare gold salts, violet ribbons waving in black paste, variegated bubbles blown through metallic vapors into the incandescent flux, small drops similar to the seed plot of stars, enameled glass blazing in ruby colors, imitations of mossy agates, agate-like onyx, imperial green jade, quartz in which mica and amianthus bring the cracks to light — the most mysterious combinations, the richest union of planets in genesis, the master artist has them all subjugated.

NOW he realizes his dreams! This vase, destined for the Musée du Luxembourg, has the melancholy tint of autumn foliage when the night breaks in. Skilful carving shows alternately the dull and the bright colors. Little branches of the poplar weep there in golden wavy ringlets, with the etched rhythms of Victor Hugo vibrating in the crystal: "The tree on the road shakes the dust of the day in the evening breeze." To another, inspired by a work of Berlioz, he has given the uniformly blue and brilliant shading which the lakes in Lombardy have in the evening. A hunting gourd, all bathed in a joyous break of day, bears Baudelaire's verses: "Happy he whose thoughts take as lofty a flight as the lark when she flies up into the skies in the morning." And this delicious one by Verlaine is crystallized amidst gloomy flowers: "She has closed her divine eyes of clematis."

HERE is nothing that Gallé has not tried, for he is an artist through and through. I have found certain perfume bottles which gave one the impression of being made of polished amber combined with something still more voluptuous. Sarah Bernhardt and Bartet, so I am told, are scarcely able to keep their fingers off of these almost living crystals.

WITHOUT vanity, though he has good reason for pride, untouched by flattery and not at all desirous of fulsome advertising, he is but little known outside of the circle of his fellow artists. He counts the friendship and esteem of Puvis de Chavannes as worth more to him than any loud praises from the world in general.

(Translated from *La Plume*, Paris.)

An Afternoon with Claude Monet. By Anna Seaton Schmidt

IT is a delightful journey, through the garden lands of France, from Paris to the small village of Giverny, the home of Claude Monet. No one should criticise the vivid coloring in Monet's pictures until he has seen the hills and valleys that spread out like a panorama before his home, where the shadows are deep blue and purple in the sunset, and the Seine winds between low-hanging foliage and myriads of summer blossoms of most gorgeous hue. As we approached the house our attention was attracted by a huge white umbrella which almost obscured the figure of the painter who sat beneath it. Yet Monet is not a small man; on the contrary he is far above the size of the average Frenchman, hale and robust looking, about fifty years of age, with a strong, pleasant face partly covered by a heavy beard, in which the gray is beginning to appear. This we noticed as he walked toward us. He greeted us with outstretched hands (we had been introduced by one of his intimate friends) and cordially conducted us into his studio, a large and refreshingly cool retreat from the burning July sun. It was hung on all sides with the marvelous canvases of this "giant in outdoor effects."

YES, I paint entirely out of doors. I never touch my work in my studio, yet there are many who paint altogether in their studios and who do very fine work. There is no recipe for painting,